

BOZART and Contemporary Verse

Combining JAPM and The Oracle

Founded by ERNEST HARTSOCK

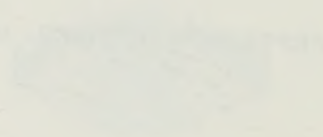


SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1931

OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, GEORGIA

BOZANT and Contemporary Verse

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Founded by ERNEST HARTSOCK

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MASK

Do not strip the mask I wear
From my face lest you see there
Lucifer himself, that lean
Scoundrel better left unseen,
That ambassador of sin
Whose foes you have always been.
Seeing me for what I am
Would you not forget the lamb
With the gentle eyes, who seemed
All the holiness you dreamed?
Look at me, and being wise
See what lurks in children's eyes.
Never, while the mask remains
Are you bound by mortal chains;
Never, while the pose is held
Is your tree of virtue felled.
Snatch not at the puerile guise,
Lest wild grapes fall from your eyes.

—HAROLD VINAL

VOCABULARY

Spokesman of day and prompter of the moon,
Loquacious sun,
We sentient things are words expressing you—
The cow a word, the rhubarb plant another,
Humanity a many-syllabled
Concretion of your breath, new-fangled coinage.
We linger beautifully in the air,
Whole-harmonizing in diapason
Wherein the cow, the rhubarb plant and man
Converge their generations; we endure
A mortal interval, like serenade
Webbed into loveliness. The ocean mouthing
Broad thunders on escarpments of the land
Has other language and the cracking sky
Bespeaking passion in the molecule
When summer heat breeds fury. This is prose
To vital poetry you frame with blasts
Of rhythmic light. A cryptic utterance
Is yours, humanity mysterious
Beyond the other words, and strangely sung
So that itself has power to make a song.

—JACOB HAUSER

HARMONY

I teach the principles
Of harmony, and cannot endure
Discordant tones.
The novice wanted me to hear
Her play a theme she had composed.
It had one fault: the seventh chord
Was incomplete, and I cannot endure
Discordant tones. My fingers locked
About her throat and then
Her dying scream supplied the missing note.

—CLARENCE L. HAYNIE

FUNDAMENTALIST

For the riddle that has no meaning
and hems him in,
He believes his stories of Eden
and falls through sin.

And the stars are gates to glory
that he will pass
When the body is stricken and flesh of him
enriches the grass.

When he goes down to the shadow
his fable must go,
And knowing of nothing, he murmurs,
God wills it so.

Who would destroy the foundations
of the house of his creed,
Beware of his wrath and his anger
and insatiable need.

He will stone him with stones on the highway;
he will hang him in chains on the hill;
In the name of his God and religion
he will kill, and kill.

For the riddle that has no meaning
and hems him in,
He believes his stories of Eden
and falls through sin.

—HENRY GEORGE WEISS

ELEGY

I

To have been loved and to be loved no more!
There is no resurrection for love dead:
Only to cast an impotent fleet flower
Forlorn to wither on the corpse of love
In vain lament, remains—to quit the tomb
With pain of tears unshed in laden eyes.

II

When one at last knows sure that to the eyes
The face most loved will shine with love no more,
Then rules abandoned passion for the tomb,
Then is one's envy only of the dead,
Then does one shrink from sight of those who love,
Then heart rejoices life is frail as flower.

III

I cannot bear to find an azure flower:
Blue were the beauty-deep inconstant eyes
Of him who answered yesterday to "Love,"
Beloved name he will not answer more;
For though he breathe, his sweeter self is dead:
Lover lies cold with silence in the tomb.

IV

Could heart renounce love's cypress-brooded tomb
Nor consecrate each dawning's fairest flower
To the pale memory of a lover dead!
Would that the world might still delight glad eyes!
Waning each day the sadness, more and more
Till heart unlearn there ever had been love.

V

Beauty is burdened with the thought of love!
Some sudden joy annihilates the tomb—
Hands lift in eager beckoning yet once more
Before the simple radiance of a flower.
Then one remembers: joy deserts dim eyes.
There is no friend to share, for love is dead.

VI

Gainless all seeking to forget the dead
Above an instant; for anew one's love
Dies in each beauty that should cheer the eyes.
All fair in earth is builded as a tomb;
Each plant is votive, a funeral flower,
Blooming for him whose love will bloom no more.

VII

Must every flower bud joyless evermore?
Eyes crave but seal of peace within the tomb?
Is it our love or is the whole world dead?

—FREDERICKA BLANKNER

INTERIORS

I have seen mountains,
Tall, pretentious mountains pointing to the sun.
Mountains,
Sure as the constancy of years in regiment,
And when steam shovels battered at the sides
Of these proud and massive forms,
They crumbled in the shovel's mouth,
Nothing but shoal and dust.

I have seen mountains
Motionless;
Mountains without pride or pretense,
And steam shovels battering at their sides
Of granite;
And they stood firm against inventive man,
Interior made of substance
Unbreakable.

I have seen men,
Stalwart men of pride and pretense;
And men, low and humble.
I have watched in wonderment
Interiors under strain—
Some standing firm as the granite mountain,
Some crumbling as dust in the shovel's mouth!

—TESSA SWEAZY WEBB

INCARNATE

You I forgot as winds forget,
When they are still,
The aromatic breath of trees
High on a hill;

You I lost as leaves are lost
From yellow trees
Like little lonely ships that sink
In winter seas;

I find you deathless when I hear
One morning lark,
Or breathe the stab of lilacs lost
In April dark.

—EDITH FULTON

CANA

My draught of life,
Insidid, pale—
Crystal, nor silver could avail
To give it savor or bouquet—

And then you came,
O Exorcist,
And made of it
An aromatic vintage fit
For bacchanal or eucharist.

—EVELYN ALLEN HAMMETT

SINGULAR

What matter who comes now,
What solace to dispense—
All faces are the same,
All words devoid of sense.

The lonely heart is most alone
In company, so today
I have locked my door
And thrown the key away.

—IRENE WILDE

NEW YORK DAWN

Across the harbor
Dawn tongues nibble at the skyline,
And lap gaunt buildings
Into goring yellow fangs.
Smoke—
Drifting from a thousand chimneys
(Incense to a thousand gods),
Stretches up wind-hungry,
And like a whispered prayer,
Vanishes into nothingness.

—EARL LAWSON SYDNOR

LOST

(In Stamboul's Underground Bazaar)

Down burrowed tunnels underground,
Twisting through Constantine's painted stables,
I was offered the world for a piastre—
Jade the sage Confucius fingered,
Viper-headed, jeweled goblet of Laius,
Tissue of gold and souls once sold
The Queen of Sheba, envied by Cleopatra,
That I, between a leper
And a soldier reeking with slaughter, bought for a song—
That is to say a useless piece of money.
The hot breath of the Orient scorched me,
Claws of the East, too close, made me tremble.
I was glad of a soft-eyed courtesan near
Who with her flowers was ready to sell her own roses.
Flickering torches glinted on monstrous coppers
Molten out of misery. From red-lit dice-dens,
Cavernous slits and crossways of gloom,
Venomous faces leered, eyes evil and old.
Swooning through cloying incense I was glad to be struck
By acrid smell of burning chestnuts.
Sour cheeses were as a cable to cling to.
Fierce dark men jostled me, followed me
With glittering necklaces in their black hands
As I fled for miles through serpentine ways,
Lost at last
In one vast nightmare of the past.

—GERTRUDE HUNTINGTON MCGIFFERT

ATHLETE

No graceful statue, bronze or bisque,
No flawless tree,
No straight and towering obelisk
Finer than he,

Who boasts a strength to match the brute's!
Though strong of back,
Yet is he weak; a glance computes
His painful lack—

A tragical omission showing
Him frail as paper:
He stares—and in his eyes no glowing
Of wisdom's taper.

—WALTER R. ADAMS

THE PARALYTIC

Daily I passed her as she lay,
With ghostly cheeks and apathetic stare,
Speechless, her small child-body dried away
Until a corpse seemed wheeled upon her chair.

Yet since there gleamed no radiant After While
When laughing youth would call with song and shout,
Why should her face at times blaze with a smile
As though the love of God were looking out?

—STANTON A. COBLENTZ

KINDRED

Build your house of rock;
Solid it will stand,
When your bones have gone
Back to the sand.

Build your house of sand;
Adobe bricks will follow;
Mingle with your dust
In hollow after hollow.

—CATHERINE KATE COBLENTZ

WIEGENLIED

Tasting the lovely duskiness of sleep
Tonight when laughter withers from my eyes,
I shall have sunk to where the hours keep
Forgetfulness. I shall have quit the skies
Of this warm world I find so beautiful—
Gone from the misty ache of sunset—gone
From April's alabaster miracle,
Seeking a refuge in oblivion.

Fleet Summer may not throw her arms about me,
Nor winter hail me forth with icy whistle,
And all the world shall glisten on without me,
Who shall be drifting, light as any thistle,
Beyond the throb of music and of rhyme,
Deep in the soothing currents of all time.

—JAMES E. WARREN, JR.

POPPY SEED

When he was about to die,
I entreated Death:
"Let him not remember me
With his dying breath—"

Two and twenty years had I
Been his wedded wife;
Never once between us two
Bitter word or strife.

But because he sought of me
What I could not give—
"Bury with him all his hope,
Never let it live!"

This I said to Death and sow,
Even as I weep—
He always loved forget-me-nots—
Poppy seed, for sleep...!

—FRANCES DICKENSON PINDER

DIVINITY OF DUST

The merest lump of clay
Forgives life's sure decay,
And feeds a trillium heart
With flame and song to part
Dead leaves. Sod knows a laughter
Witheld from wind or rafter:
A wit of circling flight,
Its proper husk, dark night
In roots whose greening stem
Makes dew a diadem.
Dust-lifted head and knee
Of an unweary tree,
Reach up a trembling prayer
To God. A bird croons fair,
Tired land asleep, and dulls
Jet dream with canticles,
Before that flame is due
On morning's avenue,
The sleepless sun. No field
Wastes miracles of yield.
And stony acres spread
A faith discredited.

But marble statues feed
The sculptor's hungry need
Of chiseled beauty. Granite
Knows Christ will understand it;
Who prayed on bended knee
In lone Gethsemane
Beside a boulder. Stilled
In death, he slept fulfilled
In stone.

With heartache toil
Rock crucified to soil
Unbinds in earth or me
Argent divinity.

—H. RAYNESFORD MULDER

SONG OUT OF YOUTH

Men do not care a straw, it seems,
When they've grown old and cool at last,
That nothing lovely limns their dreams
Except the pale ghost of a past.

But I am young, and in my blood
There flames a touch of fadeless spring;
I pluck no flower, but a bud
Assures me further blossoming.

And all my dreams are mist and stars
For love's white feet to dance upon,
Or galleons with ribboned spars
For me to sail upon tomorrow's dawn.

Maybe I shall not own for long
The mercy of these shadeless hours
That bends my lips into a song
And brims my heart with love and flowers,

And it may be that all too soon
This heritage relinquishes
The sunny day and mellow moon
The night of age extinguishes.

Yet even so I hold no trace
Of fear to find that age is truth;
Somehow I feel that Death's dim face
Holds even greater charms than youth.

—ISAAC BENJAMIN

MASQUERADE

Only a moment, but we caught them—
Elf-hands flashing from green-gold turrets of trees,
Flashing and pelting with yellow-cream crab apples
The jowls of mushrooms pink in autumnal ease.

Only a flash in the old field's corner—
And twenty vanishing rabbits shook from the air
The fragments of the dances in russet and silver
The woodland skips to, when mortals are not there.

And the heavens put on their blank, white gravity;
The quick hollow roots went mossily green.
Only twenty tails in the bend of a burrow
Told of timeless revels behind the screen.

—GEOFFREY JOHNSON

BLOW, WIND, BLOW

Strange, strange night wind, your music comforts me.
I am alone with age-old mystery
That daily living brings, and all along
The leaves there is a softly whispered song.
The moon, a Mona Lisa of the hill,
Slips from the velvet darkness, still so still,
As if released from slender chains no hand
May touch, no living heart may understand.

No one faint sound comes from the rolling sea
Of time. I am alone with mystery,
Yet, down the darkening pages of the sky,
The stars flame out, transfigured notes that lie
Upon the staff of aeons, quivering fire
That leaps again in spaces of desire.
Blow wind! Upon such nights as these
God writes the music of the Pleiades.

—KATE RANDLE MENEFEE

ARS POETICA

Poems should be lofty and marble white,
Fluted and carven as columns are;
Poems should be turned on the potter's wheel,
Smooth to the hand as an old wine-jar.

Poems should be wrought in a rich mosaic,
Cunningly fashioned of brilliant hues;
Poems should be passionate, delicate, proud
As the frescoed form of a Grecian muse.

Poems should be precious as jewels are,
Graven like gold with a goldsmith's skill;
Poems should be tempered and toned by time,
Like statues of bronze that are beautiful still

After millennial sleep in the earth....
They should not fade from a brittle page;
Poems should remain as papyrus remains,
Living and legible, age upon age!

—AGNES KENDRICK GRAY

LOST HORIZONS

Shall every cup of life hold bitter lees?
Must every back, however strong, be bowed
Beneath the freight of broken dreams? To proud,
Adventurous heights keen horns upon the breeze
Summon me still. To all high ecstasies
Of wonder and desire my heart is vowed.
And yet fear grips me in the frustrate crowd;
Shall I myself at last be like to these?

Shall I be like to these? They too have raised
Impassioned arms up to the morning sun,
Who now, unmindful that they wear the scars
Of overthrow, that ever they have gazed
Toward lost horizons, trudge in blindness on,
Content with dust who once have reached for stars.

—MARY SINTON LEITCH

REQUEST

His words are withering, and, like dry grass
That once raised emerald spears against the moon,
In hues thought dazzling, dull; his song's frail tune,
Composed and smooth as sleep, will also pass.

Words that were bold as winds where thunders mass,
Are now but chirrs from cricket-throats a-croon
On drowsy summer-eves; and very soon
His flickering fame will fade, as frost from glass.

For time's a slow, corroding rust that kills
The leaf—the bud—the marrow in men's bones,
Listening for faltering notes in mountain-rills,
While washing out the lines on burial-stones.

And yet, this boy who wears his face and form,
Will hold him safe from time's consuming storm.

—J. CORSON MILLER

SONNETIZING FOR A PRIZE

I take my pen in hand to write a verse,
Competing for a literary prize.
The line, "Art for the sake of art," implies
That money-minded authors scribble worse.
Did not the mythologic gods amerce
The hungry singers who would sacrifice
Ambrosia for a bun—would subsidize
Their inspiration with an urging purse?

So in this contest, if my efforts lose,
I who am found unworthy of my hire,
Esthetic arbiters will not excuse
This sacrilege against Apollo's lyre,
But keep the faith with some offended muse
By sprinkling water on my sacred fire.

—WILLIS HUDSPETH

THE OLDER LOVE

There remains an older love below
The roots of trees than any love I know
This day and tomorrow. There will be
The love that holds the thunder and the sea
In the hollow of its palm and charts
The voyage of death through mayflies' emerald hearts
Forever and forever. He who sings
Must learn his love songs from the cosmic things.

I shall leave the music of my pain
And learn the ancient rhythms of the grain,
Of hunger looking out at daisies' eyes,
Quiet hymns of fish and fireflies,
Which have a rapture in them past desire
And sadness elemental as the fire.
I shall learn of birds how there are wings
Folded in me as in the cosmic things.

—ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

DISAPPOINTMENT

His masculine conceit
Coveted her . . .
She, whose loveliness
Was like rare old porcelain
Blown petal-thin, and fragile.

He married her,
And then wondered
Why she did not wear
Like solid and unbeautiful
Cafeteria crockery!

—DORIS ABRAMOWITZ

AMPHIBIAN

Green amphibian shore-rock rising alone,
Buffeted playmate of waves,
Staunch over shifting sands,
Deserted, you are part of the land,
Sun-warmed . . . a gull's perch,
Or steeped in shadows, moon-thrown.
To whom will your allegiance be,
Now twice of earth, and twice of sea!

—ETHEL CASKEY

THE CRISIS

Slumber is a surgery:
Nurses, wheel me in;
Stifle me with ether;
Surgeons, begin.

Operate for heart-break;
Treat the case with skill.
I'm a stoic patient;
Either cure or kill.

Find me in the morning
Wan and fugitive,
Without interest or hope,
Knowing I shall live.

—AUDRED ARNOLD

THE HIDDEN HEART

(Emily Dickinson)

This music near me, always in my ears,
These brief and simple songs so like your own—
The vesper sparrow on a pasture stone,
A golden note the evening loiterer hears:
Up from the teeming earth and brooding tree
They rise,—songs of the heart importunate,
Songs of the waiting and expectant mate,
Not cryptic now, but meaningful to me.

The pinxters open; ruby throat comes flying;
Even the aspen tells its love to heaven,
Now its new scarf of silver stuff is woven,
And plovers nightly to the stars go crying....
Oh hidden heart! that sang for the same reason
That white throats whistle in the mating season.

—W. W. CHRISTMAN

PEACEMAKER

Within his vision farthest vistas stand
Accessible and certain; in his eye
Resides a hope that knows not how to die:
The home of justice is that gentle hand
Which makes no gesture we misunderstand;
Rejected all, war's many weapons lie—
But tools that are without utility—
Below his place, whose heart is holy land.

His ultimatum to the world is said:
All demi-gods must go, their tyranny
Forever terminated, round each head—
Like tragic beauty in a broken tree—
A wreath of glory which the gallant dead
Shall give to each in reciprocity.

—CARL JOHN BOSTELMANN

BODY AND SOUL

And does the lily, lifting up
Her tilted alabaster cup,
Rejoice in rank roots reaching down
Through soil to feed her scented crown?
Or does she, yearning toward the blue
Through merging moods of sun and dew,
Feel all her delicate green fire
Damped by the dark tug of the mire?
O, does the lily, too, aware
Of high sweet sustenance in air,
Despise the reeking loam and dung
From which her slender stem is sprung?
Or has she solved some secret way
Of harmonizing sky and clay
That gives her grace, on earth alone,
To reach to beauty's perfect throne?

—LORI PETRI

PICTURES

I am a nun in a starched white wimple,
With a life that is ordered—a life that is simple;

I am a prostitute, out upon the street,
Selling myself for something to eat.

I am a trapezist, swinging my body,
Part of the circus, glamorous and shoddy.

I am a small child, shut in a room,
Screaming with terror at the on-creeping gloom.

Yet I sit at my desk, with my back to the wall,
Saying "Yes, sir, of course," when I speak at all.

—J. L. H. BARRY

PASTURE ON PARNASSUS

By ROBERT LESEUR JONES

Dreamers on Horseback, by Karle Wilson Baker (Southwest Press, Dallas, Texas).

In this day, when a thousand writers' club and pen club poets are striving to butt their heads on the stars with their apostrophes to natural phenomena, it is pleasing to discover a poet who writes of nature and of human feeling successfully and honestly. Such a poet Karle Wilson Baker appears to be in *Dreamers on Horseback*, her collected verse, which contains selections from her four volumes. Mrs. Baker's work is outstanding for its utter sincerity, its freshness, and its fine poetical insight; if it is often personal, it is never egotistical.

This Texas lyricist handles the perilous subject, nature, of which some of our best modern poets are suspicious, with confidence and originality, and from this source she draws most of her material. Her work possesses a coherence indigenous to a clear head and a firm strength almost free from the twin evils, fragility and inconsequentiality characteristic of a great many women poets writing now-a-days. Her "Good Company" has poignancy and phrase beauty to recommend it, in addition to an especially effective rhythm:

Today I have grown taller from walking with the trees.
The seven sister-poplars who go softly in a line;
And I think my heart is whiter for its parley with a star
That trembled out at nightfall and hung above the pine.

The call-note of a redbird from the cedars in the dusk
Woke his happy mate within me to an answer free and fine;
And a sudden angel beckoned from a column of blue smoke—
Lord, who am I that they should stoop—these holy folk of thine?

Karle Wilson Baker is at her best in her first and second volumes. In these is apparent an emotional clarity and a consistency of workmanship not found to any great extent in her recent work. "Grey," "Garrets for Poets," and "A Flock of Birds," all poems of her early productive days, are particularly worth while. If the poet's technique is neither perfect nor modern in her first volume, we can forgive, for obvious reasons.... Karle Wilson Baker is not

a great poet, certainly, and posterity will not create a furore over her name, but it is just possible that she has underestimated, in "Half-Way Stone," the number of readers whom she will command fifty or sixty years hence:

I shall not leave a noisy name,
But there'll be two or three
Who'll want me, not for oracle,
But just for company.

Dark Certainty, by Dorothy Belle Flanagan (Yale University Press, New Haven. \$1.25).

While this volume of verse by the twenty-ninth member of the Yale Series of Younger Poets betrays a hint of the poet's power, there is still much left undetermined...much that time and experience must decide. When one takes into account the fact that Miss Flanagan is in the adolescence of poetry, one understands why her work is largely tentative and without a definite objective. With gusto characteristic of a youthful vision, she puts the stamp of approval too emphatically upon the impermanent, an excusable blunder when one realizes that it is actuated by an antipathy for sentimentality.

Miss Flanagan's verse is at once attractive and replete with ideas, though it frequently suffers from dilution and from premeditated nonchalance. The short verse, which she uses in about half of her poems, she employs with special proficiency. Her technique is excellent and her diction precise, though not sheer, since her verse has its genesis mostly in the mind. Her ballads, marred by a dilution already mentioned and by insincerity, are probably the least successful of her poems. That at her best Miss Flanagan can write with vigor and great earnestness is attested by her "Down South," a poem that deals with racial conflict. ... She possesses originality, intellectual strength, and technical skill, is little inclined toward namby-pamby singing, and has a dislike for sentimentality, but lacks the emotional intensity necessary to her if she is to become a strong voice.

Earth-Child, by Jane Groome Love (Kaleidoscope Publishers, Dallas, Texas. \$1.50).

In the first volume of verse by this Washington, D. C., poet, painter, and "writer of prose" one finds little that has not already been said; little that is outside the confining pale of conventionality. The poet's art is mild and personal, possessing a redeeming lyric grace, but lacking diversity and range of subject matter. In "Earth-

